

ABSTRACT

A processor for processing contents of packets passing through a connection point on a computer network. The processor includes a searching apparatus having one or more comparators for searching for a reference string in the contents of a packet, and processes
5 contents of all packets passing through the connection point in real time. In one implementation, the processor is programmable and has an instruction set that includes an instruction for invoking the searching apparatus to search for a specified reference string in the packet starting at an unknown location within a range of the packet.